T/EP2003/007671

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Claims

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1. Method for mapping a hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) to a relational database management system, characterized in that the method comprises the steps of:

separating the descriptors (1, 10, 11) into portions of a common format, and;

storing the portions of a common format in relations (20, 21, 10 22...) in the relational database.

- 2. Method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of providing independent relations (22, 23,...,32, 33,...) for the common formats.
- 3. Method according to claim 1 or 2, further comprising the step of storing information allowing recovery of the descriptor structure in the relations (20, 21, 22...).
- 4. Method according to claim 3, characterized in that the information allowing recovery of the descriptor structure comprises descriptor numbers and relative and/or absolute positions of portions of a common format within the descriptors (1, 10, 11).
 - 5. Method according to claim 4, characterized in that the information allowing recovery of the descriptor structure further comprises an indicator for the next upper hierarchical level of the portions of a common format within the descriptors (1, 10, 11).
 - 6. Method according to claim 4 or 5, further comprising the step of storing a descriptor index (40) in the relational database.
 - 7. Method according to claim 6, characterized in that the descriptor index (40) comprises at least descriptor numbers, absolute positions of the descriptors (1, 10, 11) within the

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relations (20, 21, 22...) and/or unique identifiers (4) for the descriptors (1, 10, 11).

- 8. Method according to anyone of the preceding claims, characterized in that the hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) corresponds to the Extensible Markup Language.
- 9. Method according to anyone of the preceding claims, 10 characterized in that the common formats comprise at least elements, attributes and text.
- 10. Method according to claim 9, characterized in that the common format text is divided into string values and integer values.
 - 11. Method according to claim 9 or 10, characterized in that the common formats further comprise namespace information (2).
- 20 12. Database model for mapping a hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) to a relational database management system, characterized in that it uses a method according to any of the preceding claims.
- 25 13. Apparatus for reading from and/or writing to recording media, characterized in that it uses a method according to any of claims 1-11 or a database model according to claim 12 for mapping a hierarchical data format comprising descriptors (1, 10, 11) to a relational database management system.